

How to get your Emails opened

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You've written your newsletter content, and you have all the articles perfectly laid out. Then you're faced with the task of writing a subject line so irresistible that readers can't help but open and read your email.

The good news is that we are here to help you create powerful subject lines and article headlines that will attract readers. Here are six steps to making it happen.

1. List your audience's hot topics.

Do you know what the trending topic is in your area of business and how your audience may be affected by it? Are people worried about a decrease in sales or donations? Are they looking for ways to cut back on spending or even to eat healthier? Find out what your customers and contacts are buzzing about, and keep a list of these topics handy. Social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn are a great way of keeping your finger on the pulse. By working this way you'll always have fodder for ongoing newsletter content. Better yet, your subject line writing will become a lot easier because you'll know what's likely to get noticed in recipients' inboxes.

If your business is in an industry or marketplace that's changing all the time, it's good to examine your hot topics once a month. For more stable markets, go through this practice every three to six weeks.

2. Include numbers.

Headlines with numbers in them work well because they imply easily digestible content. So why not use numbers in your email subject line too? For instance:

- "Only 4 seats left for this month's Twitter workshop"
- "5 ways to de-clutter your desk"
- "Our top 10 stress busting tips"

Putting a number in your subject line makes what you're saying quantifiable, for example; "Three quick points," "Eight simple tips," "Four seats left," etc. This lets readers know exactly what they can expect and makes them more willing to read the content.

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If you're trying to figure out a way to get numbers into your subject line, think about the benefit you're providing to your readers. Let's say readers are looking for marketing advice, and the benefit they're hoping to receive is more sales. A subject line of "5 ways to increase your sales" will encourage subscribers to open your message.

3. Get inspired.

Consider getting inspiration from subject lines and headlines you see in other online communications. A great source of inspiration is a website called CopyBlogger.com. It offers out-of-the-box, engaging, and fun subject line and headline ideas for email marketers and bloggers. You wouldn't want to take anything you see there and copy it word-for-word, but choose a headline or subject line that catches your eye and tailor it to describe your own articles.

4. Encourage action.

With any subject line, especially a promotional one, make sure to include a call to action, such as a deadline or statement such as "Respond now," to get people to open immediately. Grab the attention of your audience by being interesting and engaging in your subject line, and inspiring urgent action.

5. Think of your subject line as a tweet.

Social media is a great tool for extending the reach of your email, and in many cases, your subject line is all the text you'll need. For example, on Twitter, you only have 140 characters to communicate, including the URL of your archived message. That's more than enough characters for the subject line of an email. After all, conventional wisdom says that all subject lines should be five to eight words and no more than 40 characters long because some email clients will cut off the rest.

If you think of your subject line as a multi-purpose promotional tool for your message -- that it should encourage opens of your email and clicks from your Twitter feed -- then you'll understand why it should say more than just "Our April Newsletter." Be creative and, where appropriate, playful with your subject lines.

6. Test your subject lines.

Not every subject line will work for your campaigns, so test them out to see what tactics get your audience to open.

A good way to test this is to make a list of all the people who opened an email from you in the past month and divide it in two. Using the same email content for both groups, send one subject line to the first group and a second, different subject line to the other group. Then compare open and click-through rates to see which subject line performed best. One subject line could be more generic and

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the second could be more engaging. See which approach works best for your audience and pattern your future subject lines around that one.

7. Ask a question

Play on people's natural curiosity by asking them a question in the subject line. If you make the question slightly intriguing, they are much more likely to open the email. This is a particularly useful method if you are carrying a reader survey in your newsletter.

With inboxes full of unread messages, it's the subject line that can deliver the winning click. Make your subject line stand out among the crowd to keep your potential customers opening and reading your emails.

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